

A LETTER

FROM THE

REV. T. D. GREGG, A.M.

TO THE PROTESTANTS OF DUBLIN.

I was summoned by two complainants—the mother abbess of a Popish nunnery and a poor deluded girl—to answer a charge of using towards them threatening language, and for an assault.

2. Not a scintilla of evidence was adduced to support either charge. I threatened no one; I assaulted no one. I denounced Popery, as I was bound to do—as, please God, I ever will do. I denounced it in language identical with that which the laws of the land compel me to swear to the rectitude of, and no other, or stronger.

3. The bench itself confessed there was no evidence to support the charge brought against me. Every one around me, lawyers and all, concluded that the case would be dismissed. I had neither assaulted nor threatened any one. But,

4. I had acted against the paltry, time-serving, contemptible spirit of age—the spirit of compromise, and expediency—the spirit which daubs and plasters the fabric of society with untempered mortar. I had had the audacity to denounce Popery, and to speak plain truth with respect to the scarlet whore and those who are now committing with her spiritual fornication. A mother abbess also is concerned; therefore although I cannot be found guilty of the charge against me, I must not be allowed to escape. I must be exposed and humbled in order that I may be damaged, silenced, and made an example of, for the promotion of spiritual darkness, and the glorification of mother abbesses and nuns. Hence,

5. I am brought in guilty of a breach of the peace ; and am sentenced to keep it towards all her Majesty's subjects, under a penalty of twenty pounds.

Now, I put it to all thinking people, is not this absurdity ? Oh, it cannot be British law. It is a solemn mockery of legal jurisdiction. It is gross, foul, abominable tyranny and oppression.

Two persons advance against me a trumpery, contemptible, groundless charge—utterly improven. What had the judges to do ? Why, to dismiss the case, to be sure, when it was not supported by evidence.

What do they do ? They bring me in guilty of ANOTHER THING, totally distinct —of which I had no notice—against which I made no provision, and which nobody charged me with. I contend for it, if there be common sense in law—if there be mercy in law—that, even if guilty of a breach of the peace, I should have been dismissed, because that was not in question. The question was—did I assault or threaten two females ? This was not proved—it was not true ; therefore, I again and again say, I should have been dismissed ; and if it was intended or desired to bring me in guilty of another charge, I shoud have been summoned upon it. But, no ; I was to be victimized in a small way, as to myself ; in such a way, however, as largely to gag the Protestant mouth—to silence the Protestant testimony—in such a way as would proclaim to all Protestant ministers—“ Sirs, take notice, that we, their high mightinesses, do not choose that Popery shall be denounced, or that any man shall raise his voice to tell a mother abbess that she is ought else than a saint.”

Examine it—sift it—try it—judge it—ponder upon it. The decision comes to this—“ Free discussion shall not be indulged in—society shall not be agitated by questioning the truth of Popery. Popery is a form of Christianity ; nunneries are religious houses ; mother abbesses are religious characters ; the Homilies, the Liturgy, and the Bible are all nonsense—not worth contending about. We will insult and browbeat—we will ~~smit~~, and spit in the face of any clergyman who displays a ~~holy~~ ~~zeal~~ in ~~any~~ ~~cause~~—And then all this is to be effected in the nice ~~way~~ ~~with~~ ~~any~~ ~~severity~~—a rebuke, and inflicting a nominal penalty—the ~~severity~~ ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~nominal~~ ~~penalty~~—and the nominal penalty will victimise our object in a ~~very~~ ~~large~~ ~~way~~—in a very large way would frustrate our object by making ~~any~~ ~~man~~ ~~a~~ ~~martyr~~, ~~and~~ ~~leading~~ ~~others~~ ~~to~~ ~~sympathise~~ ~~with~~, and follow his example—therefore it must be done in a small way.”

Here was the policy, God gave me the wisdom to see through, and the power to frustrate it thus :—

1st. I denounced the injustice of the judgment, and refusing to submit to the nominal penalty rendered it necessary for tyranny to robe itself in horrors.

2ndly. I denounced the spirit of the times, in fastening the guilt of my sentence on the fact of a Papist being on the bench. My words were, “ I am convicted because there is an idolatrous judge upon the bench”—intended to convey, not so much that the particular Papist then present was the cause of the decision which inculpated me, as, that in times when men professing principles declared by the Gospel, by truth, and by British law, to be corrupt, damnable, blasphemous, antichristian, and idolatrous, were raised to honour, power, and the judgment-seat, it was not to be expected that a holy zeal against Popery could meet its due reward.

Punish me !—rebuke me !—discourage me !—call me a disgrace to my cloth, and my profession, for denouncing Popery ! No sirs ; you should have held me forth as a bright example to be imitated—a pattern to be followed—a minister to be rewarded. Shame upon the British judgment-seat—deep disgrace, indeed, upon British jurisprudence, when faithfulness for Christian truth is only known to be disparaged, and an honest, faithful man only exists for punishment. But welcome to Christ's servant—a thousand times welcome, punishment and bonds—welcome the felon's cell and his couch of straw—welcome death in countless forms, rather than the misery of remembering that truth was compromised in his person, and the privileges of his brethren diminished through his weakness or pusillanimity.

Mark, my friends—I was sentenced to enter into my own recognizance to keep the peace towards all her Majesty's subjects. To be sure I will keep the peace towards her Majesty's subjects. Who ever dreamt of my breaking it

towards any of her Majesty's subjects? But I will enter into no recognizance on the subject; for to do so, were to admit that there was the slightest shadow of a shade for entertaining the most distant suspicion that I would violate it; and secondly, the only thing resembling a breach of the peace existing in my case, was denouncing Popery; and to enter into a recognisance of a farthing piece that I would henceforward keep the peace, would be to admit, that to denounce Popery was to break the peace, and that I would do so no more. And shall I do this—shall I admit this—shall I cease to denounce Popery? God forbid. I should be happy to lay down my life, if by doing so I could lead my countrymen to take up God's blessed Word, and on their knees asking for divine wisdom to guide them in the investigation—search the Scriptures to discover what they should do to be saved. If to tell the truth be to break the peace, away with peace. If to palliate or gloss over Popish error—if to speak smooth things to Popish people, when their errors are concerned, be to keep the peace—again and again, away with it.

Then as to my keeping the peace towards Mr. Duffy, of course I will do so; but here, again, I will sign no recognizance on the subject; for to sign such a document would, to certain extent, involve me in a retraction of the denunciation that I made of a Popish magistracy. Papists are utterly unfit to adjudicate where the principles of their religion or ours are involved. And not merely are they unfit themselves, but they incapacitate their Protestant fellows from the exercise of a sound judgment. I defy any man to admit himself to a fellowship with Papists on the judgment seat, and regard Popery as Protestant principles regard it—namely, as a system that is damnable, idolatrous, and antichristian. He cannot, under such circumstances, sit by and hear it so spoken of—human nature forbids it; and yet to speak of it otherwise—that is more favourably—were to sin against truth.

Mark, then, my righteous w
The counsel for the mother abbess w
my letter, that we went to the nunnery w
then, since force had been used by
(that is, a brother taking his infant sister under his arm to withdraw her, even
against her inclination, from superstition, idolatry, and apostasy, from ruin
eternal to her soul,) constitutes an assault; and since, by his construction of my
published letter, I was a party agreeing to this assault, therefore I must be
brought in guilty of this assault, with the party who used the force complained
of. But we did not go designing to employ force. No such thing is deducible
from the passage in my letter. We went to the nunnery to remove the girl
indeed, but I calculated that we should be able to do so by moral persuasion
addressed to her, and by the manifesting of a proper spirit of indignation to her
keepers. My letter shows no further intention. And although, now that the
the thing is past, I cannot blame the brother for what he did, for I think that
natural feeling should be allowed for, and the excitement of the moment. I was
not an advising, consenting, or abetting party in it, nor was there any evidence
to shew that I was. Why then should I be sacrificed, by implication with
another party? Why should magistrates, who should feel for the character of a
clergyman, and be careful not to destroy his usefulness, drag him into a share in
an assault which he had no hand in? Why?—I shall tell you the reason why—
because falsehood is enthroned upon the public mind—because nunneries are
regarded, not as dens of superstition, but as “religious houses”—because Popery
and Protestantism, lies and truth, error, and orthodoxy are viewed alike—
because denunciation of error is no longer called meritorious—because in fact
the British constitution is overthrown, invaded, “broken in upon,” and the
rights of the people of God sacrificed, by the base expediency of their so-called
protectors. This is the reason why. But though virtue has become vice,
through the wretched spirit of the age and in its nomenclature, things retain
their old names in the HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, and when that Holy
Catholic Church tells me that Popish priests are “special instruments of the
devil,” Homilies, p. 652, the Pope “a horrible blasphemer,” p. 665, Popish
ecclesiastics filled with “the spirit of envy, hatred, cruelty, murder, extortion,
witchcraft, necromancy, although they pretend outwardly to know so much

holiness," p. 513, the "mass a filthy abusing and corrupting of God's holy supper—a mocking and blaspheming of God's holy ordinance," p. 377, the Church of Rome "drowned in damnable idolatry," p. 261, and "a filthy harlot," p. 281, the Pope "Antichrist," p. 125, mockery "a most abominable state of religion, by Antichrist invented," p. 63, "foolish," "superstitious," and "ungodly," p. 61 (edition by Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London)—when the Holy Church tells me all this, and the Holy Scriptures demonstrate it to me, I will, Christ being my helper, declare it boldly and fearlessly; and when the laws of England compel me to swear all this—and when we Protestants have brought Queen Victoria to the throne, in order to protect us in our testimony—and kicked out King James because he would not do so, we demand from her magistrates protection and praise for our zeal, instead of reproach, insult, rebuke, and disadvantage. We demand an open mouth and liberty of speech for Protestants and magistrates that will protect them in it. We demand that things bear their right names, and that we be not grossly insulted, and common sense grossly outraged, by magistrates upon the bench confounding distinctions which the laws have drawn, calling ^{lens of} superstition "religious houses," and "dumb massers" "ministers of Christ."

We demand, in fact, that we be not made fools of, compelled to swear ~~one~~ set of doctrines, and act the very opposite; to swear that Popery is of the devil, and to treat it as of God. We demand that the fundamental laws be carried out, and the British constitution made consistent with the British church, otherwise the British clergy and British Christians will trample upon the constitution, and become daily victims of their integrity.

I remain, beloved brethren,

Your most humble servant in Christ,

T. D. GREGG.

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